

STUDIES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

FIRST SERIES

BY

J. P. NAIK, B.A.,

Member, Provincial Board of Primary Education, Dharwar

WITH A FOREWORD BY

M. R. PARANJPE, Esq., M.A., B.Sc.,

Principal, Tilak College of Education, Poona

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CHUNILAL D. BARFIVALA, M.A., LL.B.

DIRECTOR

THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTE

(BOMBAY PRESIDENCY)

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9, Bakehouse Lane, Fort, Bombay.

To
R. V. PARULEKAR, M.A., M.ED.

AUTHOR OF
Literacy in India

फोडिलें भांडार,
तुझाचि हा माल,
मी तव हमाल,
भारवाही.

—Jayant P. Naik.

FOREWORD

Expansion of Primary Education, with or without compulsion, is a problem which needs much greater attention, than it appears to be receiving at present, of the officers of the Educational Department, members of School Boards and local legislatures and the public interested in the spread of literacy. It is not an educational problem ; it is mainly administrative and partly psychological. In Secondary Schools, we provide education to those who seek it. In schools started for expansion of primary education, we have to teach those who are not very enthusiastic about learning. In the first case, co-operation of the pupils and their parents is easily secured ; in the latter case, at least in the beginning, one has to overcome the resistance of the pupils and the parents. Teaching in Secondary Schools is a healthy pastime ; in Primary Schools in backward tracts, it is like hospital work needing careful and detailed study of the case before admission and periodical observation.

A retrospect of the last twenty years would show that the officers of the Educational Department have not shown, in writing or action, that they are conscious of this difference. For many years in the Annual Reports of the Director of Public Instruction, the statistics for areas under compulsion were mixed up with those of other areas ; now they are shown separately but in such a way as would give no information to the reader regarding the success or failure of the compulsion introduced. There has never been any propaganda to induce the villagers to send their children to the village schools, nor has anything been ever done to minimise local difficulties which the parents have to face. If the Educational Department alone were to handle this problem in the last twenty years we would not have had more than a million pupils in schools, instead of the million and a half we have now ; for, the ways of the Education Department discourage rather than encourage expansion of Primary Education.

We are now at the stage where England was fifty years ago. "Most of the schools were uncomfortably full, owing to the steady rise in the school population. The abolition of fees and the increasing appreciation of Education by parents were continually adding to the pressure by bringing children to school earlier and inclining them to stay longer." In such rush periods ordinary conventions of efficient administration have to be set aside, our first duty being to provide for every new comer even by causing inconvenience to those who are already in. Hence comes the suggestion for a bigger pupil load per teacher, holding the

school in two shifts, asking the teacher to conduct schools in two villages on alternate days, short school course and simplified curricula. England passed through these stages fifty years ago and so did every country which aspired to wipe out illiteracy from the land in a measureable time. India will have to adopt them all if the rate of increase of literacy has to be big enough to secure our objective—cent per cent literacy—in a few decades.

But obsessed by queer ideas of efficiency the Education Department has always preferred to attribute its failure to the stony hearts in the Finance Department who would not provide more funds for expenditure on education. No Finance Department ever does it until the need is visibly demonstrated by making schools "uncomfortably full" and thereby securing the support of the members of the School Boards and local legislatures for the demands of the Education Department; until the public opinion is roused for more education and better education by suitable propaganda through informative and illustrative bulletins. But the Education Department still believes in red tape, considers itself the master of the purse and takes delight in disallowing expenditure on fantastic grounds and allowing a large surplus to lapse at the end of the year rather than spend it in good time for expansion of Primary Education, while the work of educating the public opinion has to be done by non-officials.

Mr. J. P. Naik's "Studies in Primary Education" is one such attempt and for once that attempt has received the blessings of the Educational Department and even a small monetary aid. We hope this change in the attitude of the Department will be permanent and that in future the Department of Education itself will undertake the publication of similar leaflets to win over the support of the public opinion for the Department's demands for larger allotment in the annual budget provision.

It is unnecessary to say anything about the contents of Mr. Naik's leaflet wherein he traverses mostly familiar ground. One may differ with him in a few details; but one must admit the validity of his thesis if one believes in the urgency of wiping out illiteracy. The appendices are in a sense more important than the main part of the book. The statistics of literacy are thought-provoking and his article on "Time Factor in Elementary Education" deserves careful perusal. It was the "Time Factor in Women's Education" which persuaded Prof. Karve to inaugurate the Indian Women's University twenty-five years ago. If we know that a pupil will not or cannot stay in a school as long as we

want him to do, it becomes our duty to see that he leaves the school with a feeling of achievement, however small it may be.

But the time factor is more important for another reason. As has been pointed out by F. C. Laubach "India seems to be gaining one per cent in literacy each ten years, but in reality she is losing. Her population rose 33,495,398 between 1921-1931 ; her literacy increased only 5,515,205, but her illiteracy increased 28,380,093. Percentages deceive us. India must make 34 millions literate the next ten years or she will not keep up with her birth rate. That is to say three and one-half millions must be literate every year for India to hold her own. Less than a million became literate in 1938. India must do four times as well as that in order to make even slight progress". Calculating as above the Province of Bombay must make two lakhs literate every year. We had almost reached that figure in 1939-40, but have again slipped down to 60,000 only. Does our Education Department realise how colossal is the task before it ? If it does, there is no escape from the conclusion that we must reduce the period of Primary Course in villages to four or even three years instead of five if the rate of increase in literacy is to be at least on a par with the rate of increase in population.

Poona,

I—3—1942.

M. R. PARANJPE.

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**PRIMARY EDUCATION UNDER THE GOVERNMENT
OF BOMBAY (1823-1941)**

The object of this lecture is to trace the historical evolution of the policy of Government towards primary education during the last one hundred and twenty years. Obviously, the survey has to be brief and must be confined only to a study of the main characteristics of each period of development. But I trust that it will give a clear view of the causes of our failure in the past and also suggest the lines on which alone is any advance possible in future.

The *first period* of Government educational policy extends from 1823 to 1854. The beginning of this period is marked by Elphinstone's Minute on Education in 1823, and its close is marked by the Despatch of the Court of Directors, dated 19th July 1854, which is known more popularly as Wood's Education Despatch. Throughout this period of thirty years, Government never bestowed any attention upon the education of the masses. The only aim of Government policy was to give Superior School or Collegiate education to a few rather than to give an elementary education to all. The efforts of Government were directed solely to the education of a class of people high up in society and it was hoped that this class would take up the work of educating the masses or the lower orders. This is technically known as the *downward filtration theory* and its finest exposition will be found in the following words of Lord Macaulay :—

“We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western Nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.”

* Summary of a lecture delivered at the Tilak College of Education on 4th December, 1941.

It is not to be supposed, however, that primary schools were entirely neglected in this period. Government did maintain several primary schools in various parts of this Province. But these schools were so few that they formed but a small part of Government enterprise and were almost negligible if compared with the vast expanse of the country and its immense population. Even in the Province of Bombay which is known for the particular attention it gave to primary education, the following statistics show the small ground covered in 1854-55 :—

Population of the Province	1,18,00,000
Area (in square miles)	1,23,600
Number of villages	27,000
Number of schools conducted by Government	250
Number of pupils in Government schools	16,784
Percentage of pupils to population	0.14

The *second period* in the evolution of Government educational policy is the period from Wood's Education Despatch (1854) to the report of the Hunter Commission in 1884. During this period of 30 years, Government efforts were concentrated on secondary education and primary education still continued to be neglected. Paragraph 48 of Wood's Despatch stated explicitly that Government could never hope to find adequate funds to finance a system of universal mass education. Government found themselves, as it were, on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, they were faced with the stark poverty of the people; on the other hand, they were also faced with the problem of providing adequate educational facilities to a population which was already vast and which was becoming vaster at each succeeding census. Government therefore refused to shoulder any direct responsibility for the education of the masses. They still clung to the filtration theory of the earlier period and still talked of educating the classes in order to educate the masses. But fortunately for us, Government took one step forward in this period and began to find out if there were any other agencies that might augment the attempts made by them to spread education among the people. This was the most natural thing to do, because Government had openly accepted their inability to solve the problem without extraneous assistance.

The first agency that suggested itself was that of Municipalities. Prior to 1862, the Municipalities were not allowed to spend any money on educational activities. The then Director of Public Instruction,

Mr. E. I. Howard, suggested that this ban on the Municipalities should be removed. The taste for education had developed considerably in towns and the Municipalities themselves were eager to contribute to the spread of education. Accordingly, the Municipal Act of 1862 *permitted* Municipalities to spend money on education—not primary education only, but all types of education—and a number of Municipalities immediately came forward to take advantage of the permission. The only defect of the legislation was that no definite minimum limit for the Municipal contribution was laid down. The Municipalities were free to contribute as little or as much as they liked, and, in actual practice, the total contribution of the Municipalities in the Province was generally found to be very small.

The second source of additional income for education was the Local Fund. In 1863, Government established the Local Fund Cess in the Province, that is to say, Government collected an additional anna on every rupee of the land revenue and directed that two-thirds of the amount so raised should be devoted to the construction of roads and the remaining to the establishment of village schools. This was a very great addition to the funds that Government set apart for education and the organisation of the Local Funds gave a great impetus to the spread of Primary Education. Upto 1884, therefore, the educational budget of our Province consisted of three parts—Government funds, Local funds, and Municipal funds. The contribution of Government was generally the largest (at least towards the close of this period), and the contribution of the Municipalities was generally the smallest.

The third source of assistance lay in the indigenous schools. Before the British conquest of this Province, there existed a network of schools all over the country such as we do not find even today. The condition of mass education in those days is well described by Mr. Prendergast, a member of the Governor's Council, in the following words (1821):—

“I need hardly mention what every member of the Board knows as well as I do, that there is hardly a village, great or small, throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one school, and in larger villages more ; many in every town, and in large cities in every division ; where young natives are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic . . . there is hardly a cultivator or petty dealer who is not competent to keep his own accounts with a degree of accuracy, in my opinion, beyond what we meet with amongst the lower orders in our own country. . . .”

If only Government could have taken up these indigenous schools under their supervision and encouraged and improved them by proper

guidance and financial assistance we might have read an entirely different history of our Province than the one we painfully read at present. But Government never took kindly to these schools. Many of them died of sheer neglect. In the case of the few that survived, a consistent effort was made, on grounds of efficiency, to destroy and eliminate them. Even in 1881-82, the number of primary schools aided by Government was 196 with 13,902 pupils, although the number of indigenous elementary schools in the province was estimated at 3,954 with 78,205 pupils! Obviously, the motive of Government in pursuing this policy was to eliminate the inefficient indigenous schools and to replace them with the more efficient Government primary schools. There would have been little reason to regret this policy had it been carried out in full. But, unfortunately, Government carried out the first part of the policy only and successfully destroyed the indigenous schools. On the other hand, Government's desire to start its own schools in place of the indigenous ones was never realised, even though Government funds were considerably augmented by Local and Municipal contributions. The cause of primary education thus received a great set-back and the percentage of literacy in 1884 was probably lower than what it was in 1832!

The *third period* in Government educational policy extends from 1884 to 1921—the year in which education first became a transferred subject. Unlike the two earlier periods described just now, the attention of Government was, in this period, devoted mainly to the expansion of primary education. The Hunter Commission recommended that “while every branch of education can justly claim the fostering care of the State, it is desirable, in the present circumstances of the country, to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension, and improvement, to be that part of the educational system to which the strenuous efforts of the State should be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore”.

During the four decades that followed, Government acted up to this recommendation and gave more attention to primary education than to secondary and collegiate education. Secondly, it also provided additional sums for education year after year and the record of this period is one of slow and steady advance in the number of schools and pupils, in the salaries and education of the primary teachers, and in the general efficiency of the educational system as a whole.

But the educational policy of this period also has two grave defects: In the first place, it had no definite objectives; and secondly, there was no concrete programme of development. The aim

of Government policy was just "expansion". Every Director of Public Instruction had a fixed table in his report in which he compared the figures of schools, pupils, and expenditure of the previous year with those of the current year and everybody expressed satisfaction so long as there was an increase—no matter how slight. What was the ideal to be reached, when was it going to be realised, was the rate of progress commensurate with the distance to be covered—these and such other important questions were never raised, and the awfully slow rate of progress was not objected to at all. The census statistics give a most disappointing record of this period because literacy has increased by about four per cent only in the forty years between 1881 to 1921! "Progress" is too pompous a name for this poor record of a nation's advance.

There is yet another way of looking at these statistics. The traditional method of studying the progress of education has been to study the growth in schools, pupils, percentage of literacy, the number of literates and so on. Whatever may be the value of these methods in assessing the ground already covered, they cannot satisfy a practical reformer who is more intent on estimating 'the undone vast' rather than 'the little done'. In mass education, the goal is not a fixed point; it is moving and continually receding farther on account of the increase in population. During this period there have undoubtedly been some gains in the percentage of literacy and in the number of literates. But, in the meanwhile, the population increased so much that *the number of illiterates in the Province in 1921 was actually greater than that in 1881*. This aspect of the problem requires closer examination at the hands of educationists*. But I would like to point out that a rate of progress of literacy which is smaller than the rate of increase of population is no progress at all! It has been the tragedy of our educational administration that whereas the increase in population has been about one per cent per year, the increase in literacy has only been about one per cent per decade!

The *fourth period* in Government policy extends from 1921 to 1938—that is, to the amendment of the Primary Education Act under the Congress Ministry. As a contrast to the preceding period, the main object of Government policy in this period was to state definitely the goal of their endeavours and to chalk out a definite programme of expansion. The idea of a time-table of expansion was originally due to Mr. G. K. Gokhale who argued that Government should have a programme of mass education just as they have a programme for rail-

* *Vide* Appendix A.

ways. The Chandavarkar Committee took up the suggestion and prepared a ten years' programme for the Province as a whole. Accordingly, the preamble of the Primary Education Act of 1923 stated the aim of Government policy in the following terms :—

“Whereas it is the declared policy of Government that universal, free, and compulsory education for boys and girls should be reached by a definite programme of progressive expansion . . .”

In the same way, Section 10(3) of the same Act made it an obligatory duty of each Local Authority to prepare a programme of expansion spread over a number of years not exceeding ten.

This period, therefore, marks a great advance in the history of mass education because the goal of compulsion was definitely stated and the necessity of a time-table of expansion was accepted by Government. But, as the Scotch bard tells us,

“The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft agley.”

And the promising ship of compulsion was floundered on the cruel rock of financial stringency. The pious hopes raised by the Act of 1923 soon died out and the progress of education even in 1938 was not appreciable in any way. This is not the occasion to examine in detail the causes of this failure. But I can state confidently that it was not due to financial stringency alone. The lack of a real urge on the part of Government to do substantial service to the people and the inability of our educationist bureaucrats to evolve cheaper methods of education were also largely responsible for it.

The *last period* in Government educational policy begins in 1938 and is as short as it is eventful. Its first distinctive contribution was the amendment of the preamble to the Primary Education Act. It now runs as under :—

“Whereas it is the *duty* of Government to secure the development and expansion of primary education ; and whereas it is the declared policy of Government that universal, free, and compulsory primary education should be reached by a definite programme of progressive expansion . . .”

This is the first time in the history of education in India when a Government has statutorily laid down that it is the *duty* of Government to educate the masses. Mr. Kher's ministry deserves all our gratitude for this courageous lead that it has given, not only to Bombay Province, but to India as a whole.

Secondly, the Congress Ministry started the scheme of voluntary schools, which is just the old idea of encouraging the indigenous schools of the Province. The results obtained have been miraculous and the number of children in the primary schools of the Province has increased from 11,92,000 in 1937-38 to 15,60,000 in 1940-41 ! There has been no precedent for such a tremendous advance and I feel that, if the policy laid down by the Congress Ministry is consistently followed, Bombay Province will be on the threshold of universal compulsion as early as 1951 !

What is required is a new outlook on the part of Government. The right to receive minimum education is the most fundamental of the rights of a citizen and unless that is guaranteed, there is hardly any value to be attached to the other rights such as the right to freedom of opinion or action. A state which does not provide for the minimum education of every child born in the country does not deserve to exist. If only our Government were to realise this fundamental axiom of national administration, it will certainly find the ways and means to finance and enforce universal compulsion ; and until that happens, there is no hope for the country.

COMPULSORY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

A HISTORICAL REVIEW (1910-1941)

On 19th March, 1910, the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale moved the following resolution in the Central Legislative Council :—

“That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals.”

In a very able speech which introduced the resolution, Mr. Gokhale drew a touching picture of the educational backwardness of India and suggested nine points for the consideration of Government. Six of these were later on embodied in his bill for the introduction of Compulsory Education. The other three points were :—

- (1) There should be a Secretary specially for education.
- (2) Education should be made a “divided head”, that is to say, the cost of education should be shared between the Provincial and Central Governments. There should be a definite programme for education, just as there was a programme for railways, and it should be carried out steadily year after year.
- (3) A statement describing the progress of education should be included in the Budget statement.

Mr. Gokhale withdrew the resolution on an assurance from the Government that it would examine the question most carefully.

It is interesting to note that the first proposal of Mr. Gokhale was immediately accepted by Government and the Department of Education was created and placed in the charge of a Member of the Executive Council, the first member to hold the post being Mr. Butler. Similarly, the third proposal also was immediately accepted. But the most important proposal—the second—was rejected on the grounds that “it is contrary to the policy which animates the whole of our relations now with Provincial Governments . . . and because there are other ways of advancing education than by making it a divided head”. This question is of very great importance and one feels that it ought not to have been hushed aside so summarily. I shall not, however, say anything more at this stage, because I propose to examine it in detail in my next lecture.

* A lecture delivered at Belgaum on the 8th December, 1941.

On the 16th of March, 1911, Mr. Gokhale introduced his bill "to make better provision for the extension of elementary education" which embodied the first six points of his speech on 19th of March, 1910. This bill was based mainly on the Compulsory Education Acts of England, 1870 and 1876, and on the Irish Education Act of 1892. As it had a tremendous influence on the subsequent legislation on the subject, I would request the student of compulsory education in India to study it with very great care.

The following quotation from the statement of objects and reasons will give a clear idea of the main features of the bill :—

"The object of this Bill is to provide for the gradual introduction of the principle of compulsion into the elementary education systems of the country. The experience of other countries has established beyond dispute the fact that the only effective way to ensure a wide diffusion of elementary education among the mass of the people is by a resort to compulsion in some form or the other. And the time has come when a beginning at least should be made in this direction in India. The Bill is of a purely permissive character and its provisions will apply only to areas notified by Municipalities or District Boards which will have to bear such proportion of the increased expenditure which will be necessitated, as may be laid down by the Government of India, by rules. Moreover, no area can be notified without the previous sanction of the Provincial Government and further it must fulfil the test which the Government of India may, by rules, lay down as regards the percentage of children already at school within its limits. Finally the provisions are intended to apply in the first instance only to boys, though later on a Local Body may extend them to girls ; and age limits proposed are only six and ten years. It is hoped that these are sufficient safeguards against any rash or injudicious action on the part of Local Bodies. This measure is essentially a cautious one, indeed to some it may appear to err too much on the side of caution."

The Bill was circulated for opinion and came up for discussion again on the 17th and 18th of March, 1912. The debate lasted for two days, and it became evident that Government were not then prepared to accept even a modest bill like this. As the official members were in a clear majority in the Central Legislature of that time, and as a number of non-official members also were opposed to it for some reason or the other, the motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee was defeated by 38 votes to 13. The following, amongst others, were the grounds on which the Bill was opposed :—

(i) It is a sound maxim of educational policy that persuasion should be exhausted before compulsion is resorted to. It was therefore argued that what the situation needed most was not a hasty enforcement of compulsion, but an expansion of education on a voluntary basis by the provision of additional funds, by opening more schools, by improving schools and teachers, and so on.

(ii) No popular demand for compulsory education had been felt.

(iii) The Provincial Governments were not in favour of the Bill.

(iv) A section of educated Indians were entirely opposed to it.

(v) The Local Authorities, it was stated, would be unwilling to increase existing taxes or to impose new ones in order to finance schemes of compulsion.

(vi) It was also argued that there would be numerous administrative difficulties in the practical enforcement of compulsion. For example, it was said that the attendance committees would not work satisfactorily, that the attendance officers might harass the people, and that the punitive measures would lead to great hardship to poor parents.

Thus closed the first chapter in the history of compulsory education in India, and for all the zeal and ability with which Mr. Gokhale worked at the cause, his main object was not realised. The principles underlying the Bill—modest as they appear today—were really far in advance of the times and the cautious and conservative bureaucracy of these days would not accept them as practical propositions. But Mr. Gokhale's efforts were not entirely in vain; they had the following beneficial results :—

(i) The creation of Central Department of Education was, as we have seen, the direct result of Mr. Gokhale's efforts. It has now developed into the Central Advisory Board of Education and is capable of doing very helpful work for the reorganisation of education in India.

(ii) Mr. Gokhale's efforts had a great propaganda value because they awakened public opinion to the need of mass education. This movement created by Mr. Gokhale has grown tremendously in momentum during the last thirty years and today it can be described as dominating all the educational thought of the nation.

(iii) Thirdly, Mr. Gokhale's efforts also awakened the Government to their duty regarding the education of the masses. During the years following the failure of Mr. Gokhale's Bill, Government made more liberal provision for education than it had done before and the pace of expansion was considerably quickened. The declaration of His

Majesty on 6th January, 1912, the Government Resolution on educational policy dated 21st February, 1913, and the large increase in schools and pupils in the quinquennium 1912-17 are all evidences of this indirect result of Mr. Gokhale's efforts.

But great ideas like these are not born to die. They may lie dormant for a time, but they arise again with redoubled force as soon as circumstances become favourable. This was exactly the case with Compulsory Education. Mr. Gokhale's ideas were taken up five years later by the late Mr. Vithalbhai Patel who introduced, in 1917, a bill in the Bombay Legislative Council for permitting Municipalities to introduce compulsion in their areas. This Bill received the assent of the Governor-General on the 5th of February, 1918, and became the Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act of 1918. This is popularly known as the "Patel Act".

This Act awakened nation-wide interest and it can be confidently asserted that all the compulsory education Acts in India are modelled either on Mr. Gokhale's Bill or on the Patel Act. A careful study of these two measures is therefore essential to understand the common features of the law relating to compulsory education in all the provinces of British India.

The period of 1917-27 forms the second chapter in the history of compulsory education in India and may be described as the boom-period for compulsion. These days were most favourable to educational advance. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were introduced and, for the first time in the history of the nation, the Education portfolio was placed in the hands of an Indian Minister responsible to a legislature with a large elected majority; there was a great awakening among the masses owing to the Non-Co-operation Movement; the intelligentsia began to develop a sympathy for the masses and several movements were set afoot with a desire to improve the education and living conditions of the millions of our villagers. These social and political changes gave a great fillip to compulsory education. The opposition or indifference of 1912 soon disappeared and its place was taken up by a child-like faith in the efficacy of compulsion. For example, take the following quotation from the report of the D. P. I. (Bombay) for 1921-22 :—

"There is a feeling, vague and undefined, among the uneducated classes that universal compulsory education will bring about a new age with wealth and happiness for all. That this idea is held even by some persons who have received education was shown by some of the evidence given before the Compulsory Education Committee. Thus one witness ✓

solemnly informed the Committee that with universal education the people would become so enlightened that disease would cease and the hospitals would be closed, the money thus saved providing the resources for the schools" (p. 67).

The sneer implied in the passage may be ignored ; but there is no doubt that it portrays faithfully the enthusiastic but uncritical attitude of this period towards the problems of compulsory education.

It is no wonder, therefore, that all the compulsory education Acts of British India Provinces (except N.-W. F. Province where the circumstances are very peculiar) were either conceived or passed in this period. The following table gives detailed information regarding them :—

Year	Province	Name of Act	Whether for boys or girls	Area
1919	Punjab	P. E. Act	Boys	Rural & Municipal
	U. P.	"	Both	Municipal
	Bengal	"	Boys	do.
	Bihar & Orissa	"	Boys	Rural & Municipal
1920	Bombay	City of Bombay P. E. Act	Both	City of Bombay
	C. P.	P. E. Act	Both	Rural & Municipal
	Madras	Elementary Education Act	Both	do.
1923	Bombay	P. E. Act	Both	do.
1926	Assam	P. E. Act	Both	do.
	U. P.	District Boards P. E. Act	Both	Rural
1930	Bengal	Bengal (Rural) P. E. Act	Both	do.
1932	"	P. E. (Amendment) Act	Girls	Municipal
1939	N. W. F.	P. E. Act	Boys	Rural & Municipal

By 1927, therefore, all the British Indian Provinces (except N.-W. F. Province) had passed a compulsory Act and the dreams of Mr. Gokhale were realised fifteen years after the failure of his own bill for compulsory education. Another achievement of this boom-period was the rapid expansion of primary education on a voluntary basis. In the ten

years from 1917-27, the number of primary schools in British India rose from 1,42,203 to 1,89,287 and that of their pupils from 58,18,730 to 82,53,442. The increase was almost phenomenal and was not even equalled in any preceding decade.

The *third chapter* in the history of compulsory education begins in 1928 and continues to this day. During this period, we find that compulsion has been introduced in several parts of India. The following table shows the progress of compulsion in the several provinces of India as it stood on 31st March, 1937 :—

Province	Urban areas	Rural areas	No. of villages in rural areas under compulsion
Madras	27	7	104
Bombay	9	1	143
Bengal	1	...	...
United Provinces	36	25	1,224
Punjab	63	2,981	10,450
Bihar	1	1	1
Central Provinces and Benar	27	8	508
Sind	1	1	613
Orissa	1	1	14
Delhi	1	9	15
Total ...	167	3,034	13,072

The following special features of the situation may be noted :—

(i) A much greater progress has been made in urban areas than in rural ones. This is due to two causes ; firstly, the conditions in urban areas are more favourable to the introduction of compulsion ; and secondly, both Government and the L. As. are tempted to take up schemes in urban areas because the “additional” cost of compulsion in these areas is far less than that of introducing compulsion in rural ones.

(ii) Except in Punjab, the progress of compulsion in rural areas is extremely small. Out of the seven lakhs of villages in India, only about 13,072 villages have been brought under compulsion. Out of these, as many as 10,450 are in the Punjab only : the problem of com-

pulsion is mainly a rural problem and hardly any adequate attempt has yet been made to solve it.

(iii) Compulsion is more needed for girls than for boys ; and yet, more boys have been brought under compulsion than girls. In some Provinces, e.g., the Punjab and the N.-W.F. compulsion can be applied to boys only ; in other Provinces, even though the law permits the application of compulsion to girls, most of the compulsory schemes are applicable to boys only.

(iv) The rate of extension of compulsion is very slow. At the rate at which we have been progressing now, it will take us nearly 500 years to introduce universal compulsion : In Bombay, for example, the P. E. Act of 1923 contemplated the introduction of universal compulsion in ten years. But even today, seventeen years after the passing of the Act, only 3 per cent of the population has been brought under compulsion. (The City of Bombay which is not governed by the above Act has been excluded in these calculations). Education, to be effective, must pour and not trickle.

(v) Even in the few areas where compulsion has been introduced, its enforcement is far from satisfactory. The enrolment of children is not appreciable, and generally about 60 to 80 per cent of the total number of the children of school-going age only has been enrolled. The average attendance is low and hardly better than in schools where no compulsion exists. Wastage in compulsory areas is as bad as in non-compulsory ones. The Local Authorities are unwilling to prosecute defaulting parents and very few prosecutions are launched under the Compulsory Education Act. To sum up, it may be said that compulsion is not at all enforced in a rigid manner and that it exists more or less on paper only.

As a natural reaction to these results, the official opinion is gradually crystallising in an opposition to compulsion. Our educational bureaucrats have never really stood for mass education. They have always advocated quality and efficiency and have always expressed a strong disapproval of rapid expansion. In the days of Mr. Gokhale, they could carry the Legislative Council with them, and throw out his bill. In the period following the transfer of control to ministerial hands, they had to bend before the storm of public enthusiasm and support the cause of compulsion. But now, the official opinion has organised itself again. It proudly points out the failure of Local Authorities to enforce compulsion in a rigid manner almost as if to say, "Did I not tell you so ?" Today it has again gone back to the stand it took in 1912 and the

Director of Public Instruction of United Provinces has publicly stated that "compulsion should be withdrawn. . . . and the money better applied". Unfortunately for us, he is not the only one to hold this view.

On the other hand, public opinion is becoming stronger and stronger in favour of compulsion and mass education. Owing to the immense national awakening that has taken place since 1931 and particularly after 1935, the masses are getting conscious of their rights and the relations between the masses and intelligentsia have become closer than ever. There is a growing demand to reform the present top-heavy system of education and to put it on the really firm basis of mass education and universal literacy.

As can be easily anticipated, the main feature of this chapter in the history of compulsion is this ideological difference between non-official opinion on the one hand and the official dictums on the other. It is quite certain that the former alone will triumph in course of time.

Let us all hope that the *fourth chapter* in this history will be opened very soon and that a triumphant public opinion will throw all official caution to the winds and immediately introduce free and compulsory elementary education all over India.

III

A CASE FOR COMPULSION*

THAT one should be called upon to make out a case for the introduction of compulsory elementary education in the year of grace, 1941, is, in itself, a tragic event. Experience all the world over has established beyond dispute the fact that a resort to compulsion is the only method of advancing mass education. Most of the leading nations of the world have introduced compulsory primary education more than fifty years ago : and today, some of them have even introduced compulsory secondary education which, in content, is nearly of the same standard as that of our Matriculation. But we, in India, are still sceptic about the necessity or practicability of compulsory elementary education and often ask whether compulsion is really indispensable, or whether the present is the proper time to introduce it. I, therefore, propose to deal with this question in the course of today's lecture and to show why we badly need compulsory elementary education, and need it without delay.

The case against compulsion generally takes two forms ; some persons question the necessity of compulsion itself on the main ground that good schools, able teachers, and the natural interest which parents have in the future career of their children will do all the needful in the matter. On the other hand, a large body of educationists admits the ultimate necessity of compulsion but feels that there are insuperable educational, social, financial, and administrative difficulties in a programme of universal compulsion. The conclusion, however, is the same in both cases though the grounds advanced are fundamentally different.

Let us first consider the validity of the arguments on which the need of compulsion itself is challenged. These may be briefly stated as under :—

(i) Good schools and able teachers will attract almost as many pupils as are generally enrolled under a system of compulsory education.

(ii) Compulsion is an encroachment upon the rights of the pater-familias.

(iii) Compulsory elementary education is a means to an end and not the end itself. The common belief is :

* A lecture delivered at Kolhapur on the 10th December 1941.

- (a) compulsory elementary education will lead to literacy ; and
- (b) literacy will lead to the minimum education which is necessary for a citizen.

There is never any dispute regarding the goal to reach—minimum education ; but one cannot readily agree—

- (a) that compulsory elementary education will inevitably lead to literacy ; and
- (b) that the literacy will inevitably lead to minimum education.

(iv) Even assuming that compulsory elementary education will inevitably lead to literacy, it is highly doubtful whether 'mere' literacy will be a boon to the society. It is quite likely that even universal literacy may produce no result at all or may only create a discontented proletariat that will fall an easy prey to the unscrupulous agitators of all types.

It may be pointed out that these arguments are neither new nor peculiar to India. They have been advanced by the opponents of compulsion in every country when the question of introducing universal compulsory education came up for discussion, and it is no wonder if history is repeating itself again in India. I shall, therefore, not take much of your time in trying to refute these arguments in detail. It will be enough if I state some well-established evidence to the contrary.

(i) It is not correct to say that good schools and able teachers can enrol as many children in schools as compulsion can. No one can challenge the need for good schools or able teachers ; in fact, these are both *necessary* and *useful* for the spread of mass education. But by themselves, they are never *sufficient* for enrolling all the children. They can never achieve what compulsion can. In support of this view, I shall quote here a passage from an English Document—the report of the Royal Commission appointed in 1886 to report on the working of the measure to make attendance at school compulsory in England and Wales :—“It is to compulsion that the increase of the numbers on the roll is largely attributable. Among the witnesses before us, Mr. Stewart appears to stand alone in his opinion that, provided the required accommodation had been furnished, the result would have been much the same if attendance had not been obligatory. But to estimate fairly the influence, which compulsion has had upon the great increase in the number of children attending school, we must speak of it under the three heads into which its operation may be divided. There is, first, the direct influence of compulsion. This is exerted over parents, who

are indifferent to the moral and intellectual welfare of their children, who are very eager to obtain what advantage they can from their children's earnings, but who never look beyond. . . . But, secondly, compulsion exercises an indirect influence. Many parents are apathetic, yield weakly to their children's wish not to go to school. . . . But they are keenly alive to the disgrace of being brought before a Magistrate, the fear of which supplies a stimulus sufficient to make them do their duty in this respect. In addition, the existence of a compulsory law has considerably affected public opinion and has done much to secure a larger school attendance by making people recognise that the State regards them as neglecting their duty if their children remain uneducated."

(ii) Secondly, experience has shown that the best interests of the children are not always safe in the hands of their parents. Sometimes, the parent neglects the education of his children. Oftener still, poverty compels him to exploit the labour of his children when they ought to be reading in schools. But, whatever the cause of this neglect may be, it is undeniable that these uneducated or ill-educated children grow up as a menace to the harmonious development and progress of society as a whole. The view is, therefore, gaining ground in modern times that the State should hold itself *directly* responsible for the education of *all* the children within its jurisdiction. Ordinarily, the parent takes care of the education of his children and so long as he does this satisfactorily, the state does not interfere. But in case he fails to do so, the state must have the power to compel him to give the irreducible minimum of education to all his children. This cannot be described as an interference with the rights of the pater-familias ; it is merely a fulfilment of the duty which the state owes to the rising generation.

(iii) It is true that literacy is not education in itself ; it is also true that mere literacy is not a very great asset to an individual. But as the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale observed : "Literacy is better than illiteracy any day and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement." Universal literacy is the very foundation of mass education. When one proposes to liquidate the illiteracy of the Indian people, he is attacked on the ground that literacy is the goal of his endeavours. This is never so. The advocates of compulsion look upon literacy, not as the *end*, but as the *beginning* of mass education. From their point of view, universal literacy is the first and most indispensable step in a programme of mass education. It may be that literacy may not lead to minimum education in certain cases ; but it is impossible to realise the goal of minimum education without the aid of literacy.

(iv) To the argument that even universal literacy may not lead to any social improvement, the best reply has been given by Mr. G. K. Gokhale. He said :—

“No one is so simple as to imagine that a system of universal education will necessarily mean an end to all our ills, or that it will open out to us a new heaven and a new earth. Men and women will still continue to struggle with their imperfections and life will still be a scene of injustice and suffering, of selfishness and strife. Poverty will not be banished because illiteracy has been removed, and the need for patriotic or philanthropic work will not grow any the less. But with the diffusion of universal education the mass of our countrymen will have a better chance in life. With universal education there will be hope of better success for all efforts, official or non-official, for the amelioration of the people—their social progress, their moral improvement, their economic well-being. I think, my Lord, with universal education the mass of the people will be better able to take care of themselves against the exactions of unscrupulous money-lenders or against the abuses of official authority by petty men in power. My Lord, with 94 per cent of our countrymen sunk in ignorance, how can the advantages of sanitation or thrift be properly appreciated, and how can the industrial efficiency of the worker be improved? With 94 per cent of the people unable to read or write, how can the evil of superstition be effectively combated, and how can the general level of life in the country be raised?”

It is not necessary, I think, to discuss this question any more. Thirty years ago, this controversy was the burning topic of the day; but now the official as well as non-official opinion is unanimous on the necessity of compulsion, and the controversy is almost sealed. Any detailed examination of the pros and cons of the problem will, therefore, be of historic or academic interest only and to those who are particularly interested, I would refer to the Legislative Assembly Debates of 1910-12 when the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale made heroic attempts to introduce the idea of compulsion in the elementary education of the country.

Let us now turn to the second group of the critics of compulsion, viz. those who admit the necessity of compulsion but who feel that the time is not yet ripe for its introduction. The large majority of the opponents of compulsion belong to this class and it is on this issue that tough controversies are now being waged. The Hartog Committee, for example, examined the whole question of compulsion and came to the following conclusion :—

“ Although we regard compulsion as essential to the ultimate success of mass education, we realise that the immediate and wide-spread application of compulsion would present serious, and in some places, almost insuperable financial difficulties, and that a sound system of vernacular education can only be developed upon lines which permit the consolidation of one position before another position is attacked. In many places drastic reorganization of the elementary system should precede any wide application of compulsion ; for an impetuous and ill-considered application of the principle would inevitably result in much unprofitable expenditure of money and even in the accentuation of many of the present evils. To compel children to attend or stay in ineffective, ill-equipped and badly-staffed schools such as are found at present in large numbers, in many provinces, can only result in a serious addition to the existing waste.”

I, therefore, propose to examine this aspect of the problem in great detail. For clarity of exposition, I shall state the argument against compulsion and the reply to it just opposite to each other.

Argument against compulsion.

1. In this Province the real problem is to provide schools for those who are willing to come. It may be interesting to note that in the quinquennium 1917-22, the rise in school-going children, per year, was 45,000.

It fell down to 37,000 in 1922-27, to 31,000 in 1927-32 and to 28,000 in 1932-37 but in the year 1938 it was again 51,000 and in 1939 it was 1,31,000.

Where is the need of compulsion so long as a lakh and a half more pupils attend school every year of their own accord? Provide for them before tempting others in.

Reply.

1. There is a fallacy in this argument which arises from the fact that *all* the areas of the Province are treated alike. From the point of view of elementary education, we may divide the towns and villages of the Province into three groups:

(i) Urban areas where nearly 80 to 85 per cent of the total population of school-going age is already at school on a voluntary basis and where the public opinion is quite ready for compulsion.

(ii) Bigger villages where schools already exist but where only a minority of the total population of school-going age is enrolled into schools on a voluntary basis.

(iii) School-less villages.

It will be a great error to treat all these areas on the same footing. The large increase in pupils in 1938-1939 is due to the opening of voluntary schools in school-less villages; and so far as group (iii) above is concerned, the policy of expansion on a voluntary basis should be continued.

But group (i) above is quite ready for the introduction of compulsion and with a little intensive propaganda, group (ii) also will be ready for it within three or four years. The question of compulsion in groups (i) and (ii) must therefore be tackled *simultaneously* with that of voluntary expansion in group (iii), and compulsion should also be introduced in villages of group (iii) three or five years after the opening of schools therein.

Argument against compulsion.

2. It is common knowledge that even in places where there is no compulsion there is wastage due to—

- (a) premature withdrawals;
- (b) stagnation; and
- (c) lapse into illiteracy.

Compulsion may at best prevent (a), but the gain will all be lost by increasing wastage due to (b) & (c).

It would, therefore, be an ill-considered step to launch a scheme of compulsion before efforts are made to minimise stagnation and prevent lapse into illiteracy.

The agricultural commission has observed (and that observation is endorsed by the Hartog Committee) that compulsion should be introduced only if it leads to decreasing wastage, not if it is likely to increase it. The view should be acceptable to all.

Reply.

2. To argue that "stagnation" will increase on account of compulsion is not a correct view. Stagnation is due to several causes but the most important of these are:—

- (i) Irregular attendance;
- (ii) Inefficient teaching;
- (iii) Faulty examinations; and
- (iv) Faulty syllabus.

It will be seen that compulsion will secure regular attendance and hence remove cause (i) which is one of the most important causes of stagnation. Hence other factors remaining the same, compulsion can only assist in reducing stagnation; it cannot contribute to its increase.

Similarly, compulsion cannot increase the extent of "lapse into illiteracy". It is necessary to remember that there is a good deal of misunderstanding on the subject and that the extent of the real lapse into illiteracy is probably very small. This is due to—

- (i) the short period spent at school which does not enable the child to acquire effective literacy; and
- (ii) absence of reading rooms and libraries which would assist in maintaining the literacy acquired at school.

At present, an average pupil spends about two years at the primary school. Compulsion will at least double this period and thus contribute to reducing the extent of lapse into illiteracy.

It is true that the sudden introduction of compulsion over large areas will affect the efficiency of teaching to a certain extent, because we may then be compelled to recruit a large number of untrained teachers. But the loss due to this cause will be more than compensated by the improvement in attendance, by prevention of premature withdrawals, and by the prolongation of the period which a child puts in at a school. It is also possible to recruit matriculates as primary teachers and thus partly set off the loss caused by the recruitment of untrained teachers.

It is evident, therefore, that compulsion cannot add to the present waste. On the other hand, it will help us materially to reduce the tremendous waste that is going on in our system of voluntary education.

3. The need for literacy is felt if there is any use of it. It is felt when :

- (a) ideas of democracy reach villages and the villagers are anxious to exercise their right to vote ;
- (b) the Province is industrialized and there is greater communication between rural and urban areas ;
- (c) the villagers want to read of events of which they can have no direct knowledge, the account of great wars abroad, or the story of great political or social movements like the non-co-operation movement or the efforts to banish untouchability ;
- (d) people migrate to other lands for trade and colonization ; and
- (e) there is greater association of the illiterate population in villages with the literate population in cities.

3. This argument is based on a vicious circle. It is true that the average villager does not appreciate literacy, and that he is extremely apathetic to all attempts at reform. In fact, the one great task before the nation is to overcome the century-old inertia of our peasants, to make them take an intelligent interest in their environment, and to inspire them with a zeal to improve their own position in life. It would be an endless discussion to argue whether this result should precede universal compulsion or follow it. Literacy is at once the means as well as the effect of this awakening and the two will have to go on side by side, supporting and supported by each other.

Argument against compulsion.

All these forces were at work in England between 1833 and 1870 when compulsion was introduced in a rigid form.

In India, the villager is still apathetic. Until he feels the need to acquire literacy, compulsion cannot and should not be introduced.

4. "Compulsion" presupposes "unwillingness" and unwillingness to attend school may be due to—

- (a) absence of tradition ;
- (b) inefficiency of schools ;
- (c) schools, though efficient in the ordinary way, not meeting the child's needs ;
- (d) schools giving a harmful bias to the child-mind by creating expensive tastes in dress, mode of living, etc. ;
- (e) schools presided over by unsympathetic headmasters ;
- (f) need of literacy not being felt ;
- (g) tyranny of social customs ;
- (h) sheer perverseness of parents.

Before compulsion is introduced vigorous efforts should be made to remove these causes of unwillingness—

- (a) by improving schools by giving them better buildings, more teaching aids, contented teachers ;
- (b) by suitable timings and changes in the syllabus ;

Reply.

4. Briefly summed up, this argument has two aspects :—

- (a) It is argued that *improvement* of the educational system must *precede its extension* ; and
- (b) secondly, it is argued that *persuasion must be exhausted* before compulsion is resorted to.

The first of these arguments is based on a fallacy. Quality is certainly important but not of such fundamental importance as quantity. There is no end to the improvement of quality because we cannot have perfect pupils, perfect schools, and perfect teachers. To argue, therefore, that no extension of education should be undertaken until the existing schools are thoroughly improved is to wait till the Doomsday to realise compulsion. The progress of mass education in every country shows that quantity has always preceded quality in the stages of expansion. The lever of quality must follow the lever of quantity and not block the way of the latter. As the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale observed : "The primary purpose of mass education is to banish illiteracy from the land. The quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy is banished."

- (c) by appointing women teachers in place of men teachers;
- (d) by supplying books and slates to the needy;
- (e) by carrying on a propaganda to convince the villagers that literacy is a great advantage.

When all this is done and if some sections are still **perverse it will be time for launching compulsion schemes.**

5. Lastly, it is argued that officers qualified to deal with the problem of compulsion are not available and that the sudden introduction of compulsion will only create "a horde of petty officials and attendance officers who will batten upon the people and make the very name of compulsion a **by-word** and a reproach."

The second argument is also based on a fallacy. It is true that propaganda will enrol large numbers of children and that propaganda will be greatly useful in the case of girls. But though propaganda is useful, it should not be forgotten—

- (a) that compulsion will greatly strengthen the hands of the propagandist;
- (b) that compulsion shall quicken the pace of expansion faster than any propaganda; and
- (c) that compulsion is less wasteful than a system of voluntary education based on propaganda alone.

The sword of Democles has an effect of its own even if it never falls. Hence the wiser course would be to introduce compulsion immediately and to rely more on persuasion and propaganda than on prosecution in the earlier stages of the experiment.

5. It is true that *at present* we do not have sufficiently qualified officers to deal with the problem. But this does not mean that we *cannot* have them *in the near future* when compulsion has already been introduced in several areas for the last twenty years or more. Some experience of the work is already at our disposal and it is quite possible to train the Departmental officials in the problem in a short time. Moreover, it is to be remembered that experience, which trains the official and the non-official alike, is obtained *after* the introduction of compulsion and not *before* it. To argue that we should not introduce compulsion till we have experienced officers is just like arguing that one must not enter water unless one has learnt to swim.

This, in brief, is the case against the *immediate* introduction of compulsion, and the reply to it. You will have noticed that the whole opposition to compulsion is based on a love of quality, on a child-like fear that the whole educational machinery will crumble to pieces if it is suddenly loaded with the millions of children who are now out of it. There is hardly any justification for this fear. It may be that the quality of education may go down a little; but the loss will be more than compensated by the gain in mass awakening, in the stimulus that life as a whole will have. To my mind, the cautious educationist who hesitates to introduce compulsion is just like a timid bat that is unwilling to open its eyes in the early morning. The gloom of the night has been so familiar to it that it shrinks from entering into light and the kingdom of Heaven. But though we may *understand* his action we *cannot justify* it on any account.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have taken so much of your time in discussing the pros and cons of the question because it is often necessary to do so in official documents. But all this labour is really unnecessary. The case for compulsion is based on irrefutable humanistic considerations. Compulsory education is the child's Magna Charta of freedom because it assures him of a minimum education before entering life and thus gives him an equality of opportunity with most of the other children in the country. It is freedom's bulwark against privilege because the spread of education among the masses is the greatest of forces which tend to level down human inequalities. It is the birthright of every citizen and the most important obligation that the State owes to every child within its jurisdiction. It is, therefore, the duty of the Provincial Governments in India to introduce compulsory elementary education without the least delay. Difficulties there are and there always will be. But they are made to be overcome as, and when, they arise. As Doctor Johnson observed, "Nothing noble will ever be attempted, if all possible objections are to be first answered." To my mind, there is not only profound humour but also great wisdom in the confession of the apprehensive mortal who said "I was afraid of so many things; *but most of them never happened.*"

IV

THE CASE OF THE POOR PARENT*

IN this lecture, I propose to discuss the difficulties that would be felt by the poor parents if universal compulsion is introduced in this Province. You are aware that a sympathy for the poor parent is one of the grounds on which the introduction of compulsion is frequently opposed. It is represented that the large majority of parents in India are so poor that they are obliged to use the labour of their children in order to balance their family budgets. It is therefore argued that the introduction of compulsion will prevent such employment of child labour, will upset many a family budget, and will cause untold hardship to poor parents. The inevitable conclusion is that universal compulsion cannot be introduced in India until the poverty of the people is lessened.

For example, the Director of Public Instruction in the United Provinces has observed :—

“ Suffice it to say, that the whole scheme (of compulsory education) needs revision and the experimental areas closed and the money better applied . . . *The economic condition of the people has been a great obstacle to success*—the children’s labour cannot be spared and nothing but economic betterment will remove this.” (A.R. for 1938-39, p. 29.)

Is this view correct? If it be, we are obviously caught in a vicious circle,—poverty preventing us from receiving education and want of education leading us on to greater exploitation and deeper poverty—and there seems to be no escape from it.

Let us, therefore, examine this view in detail.

It is true that most of the children in rural areas have to do some work for the family. Sometimes the work brings direct income to the family as when the child tends cattle for other families. Oftener still, the child is expected to do some work for the family either at home or on the farm just to save the employment of paid labour or the purchase of some necessities of life. Such is the case, for example, when the child tends the family cattle or collects firewood. Sometimes the child is required to do some work, e.g. taking care of a younger child, enabling the parents themselves to go out for work. But whatever

* A lecture delivered in the School Board’s Conference at Belgaum on the 12th of December, 1941.

the nature of the work may be, it is true that the average family in rural areas is compelled to use the labour of children in some form or the other. It is also true that these parents cannot send their children to schools for six hours a day and that their family budgets would be all upset if the enforcement of compulsion wholly deprives them of the labour of their children.

But fortunately for us, the conclusion of the D. P. I. of the United Provinces is not valid, though his premises are correct. In our view, it is possible to reorganise our educational system in such a way that the children of poor parents *can* attend schools *without* greatly disturbing the work that they have to do for their families. Let us see how this can be done.

Except in a few cases, the work that the children have to do for their families is not very taxing and does leave them with some leisure to attend schools if the hours of school-work can be suitably adjusted. For example, let us take the children tending cattle or going out to collect firewood. In the former case, the children generally leave home between 10 and 11 A.M. and return at about 6 or 7 P.M. If we ask these children to attend schools in the morning only, they will be able to do so without allowing their family work to suffer. Similarly the children collecting firewood generally go out at 5 or 6 A.M. and return at about 10 or 11 A.M. If we ask them to attend schools in the afternoon, they will certainly be able to do so. I do not mean that the work of the children is just of this type all over the Province. I am aware that the work done by children and their busy-time varies considerably from one part of the Province to another. But whatever area may be taken up, we shall find that almost all the children can be enrolled in schools without inconvenience to their families *if the school session is reduced to three hours a day and the working hours of schools are suitably adjusted*. The conditions of child-labour in each locality will have to be carefully studied and a time-table for the local school will have to be carefully drawn up. But once it is done, education will have been brought within the reach of the poorer sections of society who need it most and who are at present in an overwhelming majority in our country.

This shortening of the school session to three hours a day is, therefore, the most needed reform in our educational system. But there is so much misunderstanding and uninformed opposition to this proposal that it is necessary to examine the pros and the cons of the question in some detail.

The following arguments are advanced in favour of the shortening of the school session to three hours a day :—

(i) It will enable poor parents to send their children to schools without much disturbance to the work which the children are required to do for the family.

(ii) The rigid enforcement of compulsion is impossible without the shortening of the daily school session. Compulsion can help only in the case of those children whose parents *can* send them to schools but *will* not. In other words, compulsion is a remedy against parental indifference only. But of the children who do not attend schools, only a small percentage of cases can be ascribed to parental indifference. The large majority of non-attending children fail to come to schools because they *cannot* be spared for six hours a day, because the family needs their work. In such cases, the penal provisions of the compulsory Act will not be of any assistance. They will either remain on paper or cause untold hardship to poor families. It is, therefore, pointed out that compulsion, though *necessary*, is not *sufficient* to meet the needs of the situation. A reduction of the school session to three hours a day and an adjustment of school hours to the needs of the working hours for children must *precede* the introduction of compulsion if beneficial results are to be obtained.

(iii) It will bring to schools many a child that is staying out today because the working hours of the schools are unsuitable. In many a poor peasant's family, we find that one child is sent to school and the others are used for work at home. If the school session is shortened in duration, it will be possible for all these children to come to schools.

(iv) Three hours formal instruction per day is quite enough at the primary stage.

(v) In single-teacher schools—and a majority of our schools are single-teacher schools only—the teacher has to manage five classes at a time. This is a physical impossibility. In practice, the teacher cannot give more than an hour's attention to the needs of each class. The six long hours of instruction, therefore, do not mean better education ; they only mean an endless boredom to pupils. Under the system of three-hour session per day, the teacher will have to manage only two classes at a time and can therefore keep both of them fully engaged. This shortening in school session, therefore, will not greatly affect the quality or even the quantity of instruction. On the other hand, it will certainly make the schools more pleasant to the children.

(vi) One of the greatest evils of the present system of primary education is the withdrawal of children from schools before they have

stayed there long enough to attain literacy. It is generally agreed that a pupil must study at least up to Std. IV in order to attain effective literacy and to retain it for a sufficiently long time after he has left school. But it is common experience that more than fifty per cent of the children that are enrolled in primary schools drop out before they reach Std. IV : On an average, a child stays in a primary school for about two years and leaves it at the end of Std. I, or sometimes of the Infants' class itself. Needless to say, these children do not attain effective literacy and whatever they may have learnt, they manage to forget soon after leaving school. Consequently, the increase in literacy is very small compared to the increase in the number of pupils in schools, and the expenditure on primary education.

This evil is technically known as "Wastage" and the question of its causes and cure is frequently discussed. We need not go into the details of the problem of wastage. It will serve our purpose here if we state that the largest number of wastage-cases are due to economic causes. In eight cases out of ten, the child is withdrawn from school because he has grown big enough to do some work for the family. In rural areas where the average parent has not yet learnt to appreciate the advantages of schooling and literacy; a child is sent to school at the age of five or six when he is merely a nuisance at home. From the parent's point of view, the school is not a place of instruction; it is more a creche where Mabap Sarkar has been kind enough to appoint a teacher whose duty is to manage the noisy brats of the village when their parents are out to work on the farm. The child is generally allowed to attend school till he reaches the age of eight or nine and then he is immediately withdrawn and employed for some work or the other. It is this economic factor that is responsible for most of the premature withdrawals from schools.

It must be remembered that the parent has no option but to withdraw the child from school. Our schools are held for six hours a day, and consequently, if the child attends school, he will not be able to do any work for the family. On the other hand, the question of earning bread becomes most pressing as the child grows and the parent finds that the two ends cannot be made to meet unless the child does some work for the family. So he chooses the lesser evil and withdraws his child from school. Even an Act of compulsion cannot be of much help in such cases because prosecutions will only add to the difficulties of the family. The only way out is a recognition of the hard realities of life and shortening of the session of schools to three hours a day and to adjust it to local needs. Wherever the experiment is tried in a genuine spirit of sympathy and helpfulness, it is generally found that parents are

glad to keep their children at school for a year or two more. It will thus be seen that the most important cause of wastage is economic and the most effective way of lessening wastage is to reduce the working hours of schools and adjust them to local needs.

(vii) Lastly, the reduction of the school hours will have another important benefit. At present the rules permit not more than 40 pupils per teacher, leading to an average of 35 pupils per teacher. It will be shown later on that the cost per teacher is Rs. 510 a year, and therefore the annual cost of educating a pupil is at present about Rs. 14.

Owing to the shortening of the school session to three hours a day, some teachers can have the charge of as many as 80 children each, 40 being taken at each session. Others may have 70, 60, or 50. Teachers in charge of higher standards, where the shorter session may not be introduced, may have a smaller number, say 25, or 20. On the whole we may say confidently that the average number of pupils per teacher will easily rise to 50 if this system is universally adopted up to Std. IV. In the Ratnagiri District where this system has been introduced in the Infants' class and Standard I, the average number of pupils per teacher is 43.5. In the Dharwar District where also the system has been introduced in the Infants' class and Standard I only, the average number of pupils per teacher is 46.5. Our conclusion that the average number of pupils per teacher will rise to 50 if this system is introduced in all standards up to the Fourth is, therefore, quite likely to be correct.

This will automatically reduce the annual cost of educating a pupil to Rs. 10 only as against the present cost of Rs. 14. This means reduction of more than 25 per cent in the cost of education and a poor country like ours cannot afford to neglect such methods of economy. I shall not say anything more about this subject at this stage because I shall have to take it up again in another context.

This, in brief, is the case for the shortening of the school session to three hours per day. Obviously it is a very strong case; but some people hesitate to accept the proposal on some plea or the other. Let us, therefore, state the case against the system and find out how far it is valid.

(i) It is argued that the introduction of three-hours' schools will lower the standard of instruction in primary schools. This is based on the belief that the children who learn for three hours a day will naturally learn much less than those who learn for six hours a day.

(ii) Secondly, it is argued that this proposal sacrifices the interests of the large number of children who can afford to learn for six hours a day. "Because some children cannot come to school for six hours a

day, should we penalise those who can do so and compel them also to study for three hours a day only" is a question often asked in attacking this proposal.

(iii) Thirdly, it is often argued that parents are against the system.

(iv) Fourthly, the primary teachers are opposed to the system because it throws more strain on them by compelling them to manage a much larger number of pupils than at present.

(v) Lastly, it is argued that there are a number of practical difficulties in the proposal and that it has failed in all the places where it was tried.

Let us see whether these arguments are valid.

The first objection may be accepted as valid. It may be that the children, who will study under the system of three-hour schools, will not be able to go through a syllabus that is as big as the present one.

The second objection is based on a misunderstanding. When it is proposed that the school session should be shortened to three hours a day, what is really proposed is that all Government schools shall work only on this basis and that the grants to L.As. and aided schools shall be calculated on this basis only. A L.A. is free to conduct its schools six hours a day *if it can meet the extra cost from its own funds*. In other words, Government gives to the L.A. its grant on a three-hour basis, because that is the minimum education it guarantees to all; and the people in the L.A. area will have to pay additional taxes if they want the additional benefit of six-hour schools. Similarly, there is no restriction on aided schools. They will get grants on a three-hour basis and they may teach for six hours a day if they make up the deficit by charging fees or by collecting donations. It will be evident, therefore, that there is no compulsion on anybody to send their children to the three-hour schools only. Those who can afford it will always be at liberty to send their children to aided schools where the instruction may be for six hours a day. They will have to pay fees; but they should not grudge them in view of the additional benefit they receive. Similarly even L.As. are free to have six-hour schools if they can find the extra money required. What is really proposed is that every one shall have half a loaf free of cost—and those who want more are requested to make their own purchases according to the length of their purse or the nature of their requirements. This is a really fair proposal. It is far more equitable than the present arrangement when taxes are collected from 100 parents in order to educate the children of 40 only.

The third objection—that the system is unpopular with parents—is really too vague. What is the connotation of the term “parents”? Let us get to grips with the problem and analyse it.

We shall divide the society into three classes—the rich class, the middle-class (पठरपेशा) and the poor class. The rich people never bother themselves about this question. Their children attend special schools at considerable cost and it is nothing to them whether the ordinary primary schools teach for six hours a day or for three hours only. If anything, they would welcome the three-hour session because it means less cost to Government and ultimately less taxes to them.

The middle-class is the real cause of the trouble. It is a small minority. It is inconveniently vocal. It has been accustomed to free primary education and naturally grumbles when it is called upon to reduce the school hours or to pay fees. It is this class that is largely responsible for the opposition to this system. But as wise legislators, it is the duty of Government to tell this class that they can and should pay for the education of their children and thereby release a part of the State funds for the education of the children of the millions of poor peasants who have never yet been within the four walls of a school-room.

When we come to the poor class, we find that the opposition of the parents requires a careful analysis. If we take the children in the age-group of 6-8, the poor parents do most emphatically oppose the shortening of the school session. As we have pointed out, these parents look upon the school more a creche than as a place of instruction, and hence the longer the children are at the creche (school), the better for them. But we cannot encourage this view of looking at things. Such an opposition to the system has no educational value, and it has to be summarily ignored. On the other hand, when we consider the children in the age-group of 8-11 who work for their families we find no objection to the shortening of school session. The poor parents may even welcome it as a boon: But unfortunately, the system is being tried only in the lower standards. If it were extended to grown-up boys and up to Standard IV, the real opinion of poor parents will be understood. For the present, the opposition of poor parents is based upon a misconception of the function of a primary school and we must carry on considerable propaganda to enlighten them.

Coming to the objection of teachers, we find that it is really unsound. The system does not expect the teachers to work for more than six hours a day. It may mean in some cases a change in the daily routine and perhaps some real inconvenience which may be compensated by a slight addition to their salaries; even if there be no actual increase,

it will certainly prevent the reduction in salaries that would otherwise have been caused owing to expansion of primary education. It is really painful to see that the teachers are opposed to this reform. If they will take a broader view of the question, they will find that it is the only way to benefit the nation without doing any harm to their interests.

The last objection—the administrative one—is really unsound. Difficulties there are and there always will be especially when the thing is new and is either misunderstood or opposed. The only remedy lies in firmness—in dogged persistence in the method after we are once convinced of its necessity. We will generally find that the difficulties vanish on a closer approach. Like the pilgrim, we are terrified at the sight of the lions ; but they are chained and shall not touch us if we just muster the necessary courage and walk on.

We may, therefore, conclude that the shortening of the school-session to three hours a day has a number of advantages and only one disadvantage, viz. the simplification of the syllabus. Whether we shall agree to reduced hours and simplified syllabus and give education to lakhs of poor children or stick to our present syllabus of longer hours and keep them out of our primary schools—is the question that we have to decide.

A syllabus is, after all, our own creation. It is neither sacrosanct nor absolute. It is made for us ; we are not made for it. Every sane man would certainly agree to curtail it—especially when such curtailment means the possibility of educating lakhs and lakhs of poor children. The choice for any rational person is easily made. If we really come to grips with the problem of compulsion there is no alternative for us but to adopt the system of part-time instruction and to shorten the school session to three hours per day.

Perhaps it will give us greater confidence in introducing this revolutionary change if we know that almost every country of the civilized world has accepted this device at some stage of its educational development, and that, even today, there are several countries which have adopted this device in order to accelerate the spread of Mass Education.

For example, Egypt adopted the system of three-hour schools for two reasons :—

- (1) *Economic*, because the cost of educating all children would be three million pounds annually instead of six, and
- (2) *Social*, so as to give the children the chance of working with their parents in the farms or the shops during half the day. (*Vide* "Year Book of Education", London, 1939, p. 746.)

The results were marvellous. In 1928, the number of children attending primary schools was 2,80,000 of whom 1,67,000 were attending half-day schools. In 1938, the total number of pupils rose to 9,84,000 of whom as many as 8,58,000 attended half-day schools.

Similarly, Ceylon has also introduced the system of three-hour schools. The results can be seen from the following quotation :

“The system of ‘double school’ provides a practical solution to the difficulty experienced in most countries of having to extend educational facilities without incurring capital or current expenditure”

“Double schools in Ceylon have now passed the trial stage and have become a permanent feature of the educational system of the Island. No opposition has been experienced from teachers or parents and the Education Committees have given their wholehearted support. So adaptable is the system and so great the possible scope for economy in buildings, apparatus and staff that the Department is able to face with equanimity the difficulties arising from curtailed expenditure.”*

Denmark, which is a predominantly agricultural country like ours, has also adopted the system :

“The children’s schools are part-time schools. The law provides that the schools must be open during 41 weeks in the year. In rural schools, pupils of every class must be taught 18 hours every week ; these 18 hours a week are worked out in different schools according to local circumstances. The principle kept in view is that the farmers must not be deprived more than necessary of the help of their children. In some schools, the children attend the school for 3 hours a day for six days in the week, but much more common is the arrangement by which children attend the school for six hours every alternate day. Under this arrangement, one teacher can take two classes on alternate days.”†

Illustrations of this type can be easily multiplied. What has happened is that we have been misled into an imitation of the English system of education. England is a small, urbanised, industrial, and rich nation. We, on the other hand, are a vast continent, agricultural in occupation and extremely poor in economic life. England should not be the model for us. We have to follow countries where the social and economic environment is similar to ours and if we do that, our progress would be much more rapid than in the past.

* Overseas Education, April 1933.

† Rural System of Education in Denmark, p. 13.

THE FINANCE OF COMPULSORY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE PROVINCE OF BOMBAY *

It is very often asserted that the cost of a scheme of universal compulsory elementary education in the Province of Bombay will be so costly that Government shall not be able to finance it. During the course of this lecture I propose to examine the truth of this assertion.

To begin with, let us find out the cost of introducing free and compulsory elementary education all over the Province. For this purpose, it is necessary to know :—

- (a) the population of the Province ;
- (b) the number of children to be provided for ; and
- (c) the annual cost of educating a pupil in our primary schools.

(a) The Population of the Province

In 1931, the total population of the Province was 179 lakhs distributed as under :—

Bombay City	12 lakhs
L. A. Municipalities	14 lakhs
Non-L. A. Municipalities	13 lakhs
Rural Areas (to be served by District Local Boards)	140 lakhs
	179 lakhs

The figures of the 1941 census have now become available. According to these, the total population of the Province is 209 lakhs distributed as under :—

Bombay City	15 lakhs
L. A. Municipalities	20 lakhs
Non-L. A. Municipalities	15 lakhs
Rural Areas	159 lakhs
	209 lakhs

* A lecture delivered at Bombay on the 12th January 1942.

In preparing estimates of the cost of compulsion, it is not desirable to take the 1941 population as the basis for calculations. It will take about 5 or 10 years to introduce universal compulsion, and we must allow for the increase of population that will take place during this period. To err on the safer side, therefore, it is desirable to take the estimated population of 1951 as the basis of calculations. A study of the census statistics in the past shows that the average increase in population is about 10 per cent per decade. We shall, therefore, allow an increase of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the population during the next decade. The estimated population of our Province in 1951 will, therefore, be 235 lakhs distributed as under:—

Bombay City	.. ..	18 lakhs
L. A. Municipalities	.. ..	24 lakhs
Non-L. A. Municipalities	.. ..	18 lakhs
Rural Areas	.. ..	175 lakhs
		175
		Total 235 lakhs

Of these, we shall exclude Bombay city from our calculations. There are several reasons for doing this. In the first place, the cost of education in Bombay is extremely heavy (it was Rs. 35-4-0 per pupil in 1939-40, whereas the cost per pupil in the mofussil was only about Rs. 14-0-0 a year) on account of higher rents and higher salaries of primary teachers. Moreover, Bombay is a rich Municipality and does not need the same assistance from Government as the areas in the mofussil do. It will, therefore, be desirable to consider the case of Bombay City by itself rather than mix it up with the rest of the Province. Secondly, it is also desirable to exclude very small villages of less than 200 population where it will not be economically possible to provide L. A. schools. The total population of these villages is estimated at more than 5 lakhs and we shall deduct this from the population of the rural areas. For the purposes of this scheme, therefore, we shall have to consider a population of 212 lakhs only distributed as under:—

L. A. Municipalities	.. ..	24 lakhs
Non-L. A. Municipalities	.. ..	18 lakhs
Rural Areas	.. ..	170 lakhs
		170
		Total .. 212 lakhs

(b) Number of Pupils to be provided for

The course of elementary education now extends over five years, i.e., Infants and Stds. I-IV, and the age-period of compulsion is 6-11. It is generally estimated that the number of children in this age-group is 12½% of the population. In addition to these, there will be a few children of 6— or 11 + reading voluntarily in the primary schools and a few more children in the upper primary standards. The number of all these children is generally about 2½% of the population. The total number of children to be provided for, therefore, comes to 15% of the population.

(c) The Annual Cost of Educating a Pupil in our Primary Schools

The cost of a teacher unit in rural areas comes to about Rs. 510 a year. This cost is based on the pay-scale now sanctioned by Government, viz. 25—½—30—1—40 which works out at an average of Rs. 31.5 per month. This cost also includes all other items of recurring expenditure such as Provident Fund, rents, contingencies, training of teachers, cost of administration and inspection, etc.

At present, we do not allow more than 40 pupils per teacher and hence the average number of pupils per teacher in the Province as a whole comes to about 35. The annual cost of educating a pupil therefore comes to Rs. 14 (i.e. Rs. 510 divided by 35).

In urban areas of the L. A. Municipalities, the cost will be generally higher on account of two reasons ; firstly, the cost on account of rents will be greater ; secondly, the cost on account of teachers' salaries also will go up on account of local allowances that will have to be paid to teachers to compensate them for the higher cost of living. It is, therefore, desirable to take the annual cost of educating a pupil about 30 per cent higher in urban areas ; that is to say, we shall assume the annual cost of education to be Rs. 18 in L. A. Municipalities.

On these assumptions, the total recurring cost of introducing universal compulsion in the Province will be about Rs. 460 lakhs as will be seen from the following table :—

Area	Estimated 1951 population	Estimated number of children @ 15% of population	Annual cost of educating a pupil	Total recurring annual cost of universal compulsion
	(in lakhs)	(in lakhs)	Rs.	(in lakhs)
18 L. A. Municipalities ...	24	3.6	18	64.8
Non-L. A. Municipalities ...	18	2.7	14	37.8
Rural Areas ...	170	25.5	14	357.0
Total for Bombay Province (excluding city and extremely small villages) ...	212	31.8	...	459.6

Is it possible for the Government of Bombay whose total income is not more than 1,400 lakhs to spend Rs. 460 lakhs on primary education alone ?

Here we find a difference of opinion. One school of thinkers believes that Government *must* find all the money that education needs from whithersoever it can. It is argued, for example, that five crores is not a big amount for the Government of Bombay and it *can* be raised if Government have *the will* to do. And even assuming for a moment that the Government of Bombay cannot really raise this amount, it is further argued that the central Government ought to come forward and assist the Provincial Governments in this most fundamental of all reforms in national interest.

I have no quarrel with this view ; and if Government do find the money required, I shall gladly withdraw all the suggestions that I have put forward in this scheme. But with due deference to the persons who hold the view described above, I believe that, *at present*, Government are not in a position to spend five crores a year on primary education alone. On the one hand, we have to assume that the funds available for primary education are limited *at present* and are going to be limited *for some time to come*. On the other hand, we cannot afford to wait till the financial position of Government improves considerably or till the central Government is so changed in character that it will and can find the money to assist Provincial Governments in schemes of educational expansion. The problem of universal compulsion is, in my view, so important and so fundamental that it cannot wait any longer. It is, therefore, desirable to give the most careful consideration to the question of possible economies to finding out whether this estimated cost of compulsion can be so reduced as to make it immediately practicable.

The *first method of economy* is to reduce the course of elementary education to four years (this course is of five years at present) by abolition of the Infants' class, and by reducing the age-period of compulsion to 7-11. The effect of this reform will be to reduce the number of children to be provided for by about one-sixth. As I have shown already, we have to calculate the number of children at 15% of the population (12½% on account of the children of 6-11 and 2½% on account of children of other ages), and this means that we shall have to provide for 31.8 lakhs of children. If the duration of the elementary course is reduced to four years, the age-period of compulsion is reduced to 7-11 and the total number of children to be provided for has to be taken at 12½% only (10% on account of the children of 7-11 and 2½% on account of children of the other ages). That is to say, we shall have to provide

for 26.5 lakhs of children only as against 31.8 lakhs for the five years' course. This step alone, therefore, will mean an economy of one-sixth of the total cost of compulsion.

It is necessary to clear up a common misunderstanding at this stage. When it is shown that the number of children, to be provided for, goes down to 26.5 lakhs from 31.8 lakhs, a question is immediately asked, "What about the remaining 5.3 lakhs of children? Why are they to be excluded?" But a little reflection will show that the objection is not really valid. In both these proposals, it is assumed that *every child of the age-period of compulsion shall be at school*. But when every child continues compulsorily at school for five years the *total number of pupils in schools* goes up to 31.8 lakhs and it comes down to 26.5 lakhs when every child stays at school for four years only. The fall in the total number of pupils, therefore, is not due to the exclusion of any children; it is only due to the reduction in *the period* which every child puts in at school.

This problem, viz. that of the duration of the elementary course has been the subject of long and heated controversies. I will, therefore, first state the objections that are commonly raised against this proposal and then examine their validity.

For clarity of discussion, let us first exclude all those children who prosecute their studies further—either in the upper primary standards or in a secondary school. The reduction of the elementary course is not going to cause any hardship to these children if the syllabuses of the upper primary or the lower secondary schools are suitably adjusted.

But in the case of the vast majority of students who will leave schools at the end of the compulsory course or age, it is argued that the following difficulties will arise :—

(a) A child does not attain literacy unless it passes Std. IV or puts in five years in a primary school. If the course is reduced to four years, it is feared that the average child will pass out of school *before* it has attained literacy and that a tremendous amount of wastage will result.

(b) Even assuming, for the sake of argument, that the child will attain literacy at the end of four years' schooling, this literacy is not likely to be permanent and the child will soon lapse into illiteracy.

(c) The primary teachers now receive eight years' general education. If the elementary course is reduced to four years they will receive only seven years' education and the standard of their efficiency will go down still further.

As against these objections, the following arguments can be advanced :—

(a) It is not correct to say that five years' schooling is necessary to attain literacy. All the available statistical data goes to show that literacy is ordinarily attained at the end of a three years' course, and that four years' schooling is quite enough to attain literacy.*

(b) There has been no scientific investigation into the problem of lapse into illiteracy, and there is reason to suppose that the extent of this evil is largely exaggerated. The percentage of real 'lapse' is probably very low and the best way to prevent it is to organise reading rooms and libraries and *not* to lengthen the course of elementary education. The former method is both cheaper and more effective.

(c) It is wrong to connect the question of the education of primary teachers with the duration of the elementary course. The More Committee has recommended that the passing of the P. S. C. Examination should not be regarded as a sufficient qualification for becoming a primary teacher, and has also suggested that primary teachers should receive three years general education in special schools called 'Lokashalas' after the P. S. C. Examination. If this recommendation is accepted by Government—and it is really overdue for acceptance—the reduction of the elementary course will not have any adverse effect upon the general education of primary teachers. After all, we require only a few persons as primary teachers—about 2,000 a year. The best way to give them good general education is to organise special schools for them after the P. S. C. Examination and not to increase the duration of the elementary course. We may require only a few lakhs for all the Lokashalas we need ; but the shortening of the elementary course will save nearly Rs. 80 lakhs.

(d) A five years' course is certainly better than a four years' one. But 'better' should not become an enemy of 'good'. The only point at issue is whether a four years' course is not enough to impart the essentials of a junior course of primary education. If it is, we should immediately introduce compulsory education of four years' course to begin with and then lengthen the course to five, six or seven years when funds become available.

(e) In several provinces of India, the elementary course is of four years only. It is not argued that our teachers are less efficient, or our children less intelligent, or that the lapse into illiteracy is greater in our

* *Vide Appendix B.*

Province. And hence, there can be no objection to reducing our course also to four years.

(f) Other nations too have taken recourse to the same method. Japan, for example, began with the introduction of a compulsory course of four years only and it was nearly thirty years later that it was able to introduce a compulsory course of seven years.

All things considered, therefore, I see no valid objection to the proposal of reducing the duration of the elementary course to four years only.

The *second method of economy* is to increase the number of pupils per teacher. As the cost on account of a teacher unit is the same, there are only two ways to reduce the cost per pupil : either we reduce the salaries of teachers or increase the number of pupils managed by each teacher. I cannot recommend that the salaries of teachers should be reduced to any extent, and I do not think that any educationist will seriously entertain that proposal. The only method of economy, therefore, is to increase the number of pupils managed by each teacher.

I have already shown that the best way to do this is to adopt the system of three-hour schools. This will—

- (a) increase the number of pupils to 50 per teacher ; and
- (b) reduce the cost per pupil to Rs. 10 in rural areas and to Rs. 13 in L. A. Municipalities.

That this proposal of raising the number of pupils per teacher is not an innovation without precedents can be seen from the history of nations which have tried to spread mass education as quickly as possible. In England, for example, a definite rule regarding the maximum number of pupils per teacher was made for the first time in 1894 when it was fixed at 60. Prior to that date, there is reason to believe that the maximum number of pupils allowed must have been even higher, because the average number of pupils per teacher varied from 62 to 46. Similarly, Czechoslovakia fixed the number of pupils at 80 per teacher when it began the reorganization of its educational system in 1920. In the same way Poland began its reorganization after the Great War by allowing 50 pupils per teacher. In the Phillippines, a beginning of reorganization was made with 80 pupils per teacher and the number stood at 45 in 1934. In the Dutch East Indies, a teacher was given 50 pupils in 1935. It will, therefore, be seen that it is a fairly common practice to accelerate expansion by allowing more pupils per teacher in the initial stage and then to reduce the number as funds and circumstances permit.

I strongly feel that a poor country like ours should also follow the same procedure and allow a larger number of pupils per teacher and accelerate the spread of mass education in a reasonably short time.

It would be quite relevant here to point out that it is a sound educational principle to entrust more pupils to a trained teacher than to an untrained one. In England, for example, the number of pupils entrusted to a teacher depends upon his qualifications. But our rules are inelastic and we generally allow the same number of pupils to each teacher, without regard to his qualifications. I, therefore, recommend that we should adopt this principle generally instead of restricting it as at present under P. E. Rule 57. As all our teachers will be trained in future, I see no educational difficulty in allowing 50 pupils on an average to each teacher.

The *third method of economy* is to encourage aided schools. At present, an aided primary school gets an average grant of Rs. 4 per pupil per year. If this is raised to Rs. 6 the aided school will be much better off and consequently more efficient also.

It is to be regretted that the Departmental policy has not been very sympathetic to aided primary schools. But the history of education in this Province shows that expansion of education has been achieved, not by the efforts of Government but by the efforts of the people themselves assisted by Government with suitable grants-in-aid. Both in the fields of collegiate and secondary education, rapid expansion of education was achieved only on the grants-in-aid system and today the vast majority of pupils of the secondary or collegiate stage are taking their education in aided institutions. Similarly, the system of voluntary schools which was started by the Congress Government was responsible for a tremendous spread of mass education. In 1937-38 there were 1192 thousand pupils in primary schools. The system of voluntary schools has been so successful that, in 1940-41, the number of pupils has increased to 1560 thousand. This splendid achievement will show that given suitable encouragement, private effort will largely assist the expansion of primary education at a comparatively smaller cost.

If these methods of economy are adopted, the cost of introducing universal compulsory, and free elementary education in this Province (excluding Bombay City) will go down to Rs. 253 lakhs as shown below :—

Area	Estimated 1951 population	Estimated number of children at 12½% of population	Annual cost of educating a pupil	Total recurring cost of universal compulsion
	(in lakhs)	(in lakhs)	Rs.	(in lakhs)
L. A. Municipalities ...	24	2.4 in L. A. schools 0.6 in aided schools	13 8	31.2 4.8
Non-L. A. Municipalities	18	1.9 in L. A. schools 0.4 in aided schools	10 6	19.0 2.4
Rural Areas ...	170	11.2 in L. A. schools 4.0 in aided schools	10 6	172.0 24.0
Total	212	21.5 in L. A. schools 5.0 in aided schools <hr/> 26.5	...	253.4

N.B.—The pupils in primary schools on 31st March, 1940 were as under:—

In L. A. Schools	11,64,697
In Aided Schools	3,35,759

It will be seen, therefore, that the estimate of 5 lakhs of pupils in aided schools is not an overestimate.

The total direct and indirect expenditure on primary education in 1939-40 is as under:—

<i>Government.</i>	(Rs. in lakhs.)
Direct Expenditure	122
Indirect Expenditure	13
Local Board Funds	16
Municipal Funds (excluding Bombay City)	20
	<hr/>
Total	171
	<hr/>

In other words, it is possible to introduce universal compulsory elementary education in the Province if Government and the Local Bodies together are prepared to spend about 80 lakhs more on primary education. I believe that this sum is entirely within the competence of these bodies in the near future and there should be no practical difficulty to carry out this programme by spreading it over a period of five years, if necessary.

APPENDIX A

HOW TO MEASURE PROGRESS IN LITERACY ?

There are three ways of measuring progress in literacy.

The first and the commonest method of showing the progress in literacy is to compare the "*percentage of literacy*." For example, we may give the following statistics to compare the literacy in Bombay with that in Madras according to the census of 1941, or to compare the literacy in Bombay in 1901 with that in 1941.

CENSUS OF 1941			
<i>Province</i>			<i>Literacy</i>
Bombay	..	..	19.5
Madras	..	..	13.0

LITERACY IN BOMBAY PROVINCE			
Census of 1901	..	..	6.4%
Census of 1941	..	..	19.5%

This method is, therefore, very useful to compare the state of elementary education in two countries or at two different periods.

But it has to be remembered that this method cannot give us an exact idea of the progress in literacy. Population is continuously increasing and this absorbs a part of the increase in literacy. For example, let us assume that the population was 100 in a particular year and that 10 persons out of these were literate. This gives a literacy percentage of 10. Now let us assume further that the population increased to 120 in a given period of years and that the number of literates increased to 12 in the meanwhile. The percentage of literacy would again be 10 only. If one were to go by the percentage of literacy only, one will have to conclude that there is no progress in literacy, though the number of literates has increased by 20 per cent. It is, therefore, obvious that the standard given by 'percentage of literacy' is fallacious if the increase in population is *not* also kept in view.

The second method of measuring the progress of literacy is to consider, not the percentage of literacy, but the "*number of literates*." This method is useful in eliminating the factor of the variations in population.

But here also another factor comes in to disturb the reliability of the results. Let us assume that there were 100 literates in 1931 and 150 literates in 1941. This

means that there is a net increase of 50 in the number of literates. But the actual gross increase in the number of literates must be much larger than this, because—

- (i) some of the old literates of 1931 must have died during the interval, and
- (ii) some of the literates produced in the decade of 1931-41 must have also died during the above period. It is very difficult to estimate correctly the number of these deaths and consequently, it is difficult to estimate the exact increase in the number of literates. All the same, the determination of the net increase in the number of literates is useful as an index of the "work done" so far and ought to be carefully studied at each census.

There is a third method of measuring progress in literacy, viz. to consider the "*number of illiterates.*" This is the work to be done hereafter, the part of the journey that one has yet to travel and hence it is of immense importance to the practical reformer. The goal in mass education, at least in the early stages, is universal literacy. Unfortunately, this goal is not a fixed point. It is continually receding further on account of the increase in population. What really matters is the distance that yet remains between us and the goal, and not the distance that we might have travelled from the last resting place. Especially in a backward country like ours, this aspect of the problem is of far greater importance than any other.

Judged from this point of view, the table on the next page will show what progress has been achieved in Bombay Province during the last forty years :—

It will be seen that—

- (a) the number of illiterates in 1941 is actually greater than that in 1901 ;
- (b) unless the rate of increase of literacy is greater than the rate of increase of population, we cannot be said to be progressing at all ; and
- (c) that unless the rate of increase of literacy exceeds greatly over that of the increase of population, there is no hope of realising the goal of universal literacy in a short time.

It is only the introduction of universal compulsion that can achieve and maintain this ideal.

District.	1901			1941			Remarks.
	Literates.	Illiterates.	Percentage of literacy.	Literates.	Illiterates.	Percentage of literacy.	
	90,745	705,222	11.40	345,600	1,027,400	25.17		13.77
70,702	645,630	9.87	195,200	720,800	21.31	12.46	
44,748	247,015	15.34	183,200	740,800	19.83	—	
14,820	246,200	5.68	245,700	635,300	27.89	14.44	
85,693	551,324	13.45	148,500	785,500	15.90	10.56	
43,108	763,325	5.34	91,500	159,500	36.45	—	
...	...	...	151,000	992,000	13.21	8.54
39,127	798,568	4.67	254,600	1,076,000	19.13	—	
68,773	1,358,609	4.82	134,500	778,500	14.73	—	
35,175	781,329	4.31	166,000	949,000	14.89	10.58	
65,806	929,524	6.61	280,100	1,077,900	20.62	14.01	
46,795	1,099,764	4.08	197,000	1,131,000	14.83	10.75	
33,287	687,690	4.62	156,500	858,500	15.41	10.79	
50,883	943,093	5.12	169,600	1,056,400	13.83	8.71	
33,587	701,848	4.57	135,500	840,500	13.88	9.31	
74,623	1,038,675	6.70	256,800	945,200	21.36	14.66	
28,351	577,215	4.68	90,400	578,600	13.51	8.83	
61,446	1,106,481	5.26	187,300	1,185,700	13.64	8.38	
38,076	416,414	8.38	93,500	347,500	21.20	12.82	
Grand Total	9,25,745	1,35,97,926	6.37	34,82,500	1,58,86,100	18.07	11.70

APPENDIX B

TIME-FACTOR IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION *

It is to be regretted that the importance of the time-factor in elementary education is not as well appreciated as it ought to be. Provincial Departments of Education seem to vie with one another in lengthening the duration of the elementary course. The policy harms the cause of literacy in two ways. On the one hand, it increases the cost of making a child literate and prevents educational expansion because of the inability of the State to pay the cost. On the other hand it compels parents, a large majority of whom are extremely poor, to withdraw their children from school before completing the course and thus leads to a good deal of "wastage" of public funds. A sound educational policy, therefore, will always try to reduce the period of elementary education to the minimum necessary for attaining literacy. I propose, in the course of this appendix, to examine the factors on which this minimum depends, so that, we may devise the means of reducing it as far as is practicable.

Broadly speaking, there are five important factors on which the period for attaining literacy will depend, viz :

- (i) the inherited intelligence of the child ;
- (ii) child's home environment ;
- (iii) the age at which the child first attends school ;
- (iv) the nature of the syllabus ; and
- (v) the methods of teaching to read and write.

The first of these factors, though important, cannot be considered by the Education Department except in the case of feeble-minded children. The Departmental scheme will always be drawn up to suit the average child. A very brilliant child may attain literacy in a shorter time than what we may fix up, and the dull one will stagnate and take a longer time to go through the prescribed course. We shall not, therefore, take this factor into consideration.

Coming to the second factor, we find that a child brought up in a family where all can read and write, acquires literacy in a shorter time and also retains it longer. This is generally the case of the children of the advanced classes. On the contrary, a child brought up in an illiterate home takes much longer to become literate and is also more likely to lapse into illiteracy. A large majority of our school children belong to this latter class and we have to take note of it in all our schemes of compulsion. It has been our experience that the number of school-going children has increased in places where literacy campaigns had been organised. The parents sometimes became literate ; oftener still, they lost patience and gave up the attempt to learn. But in all cases, they decided to send their children to the primary school. Therefore, intensive literacy campaigns, especially among women, ought to precede the introduction of compulsion in any area. That will clear the ground and prepare the public mind for successful enforcement of compulsion ;

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and it will also create the environment in which children will find it easier to acquire literacy and retain it.

The third factor is the crux of the problem. The later the age at which a child begins its school career, the easier is its progress and the quicker is the attainment of literacy. This is particularly so in the present condition of our schools. We have to herd children together in big classes where individual attention cannot be given; where instruction is mostly formal; where teachers have poor general education and indifferent training, if they have it at all. Under these circumstances, we cannot properly educate in our schools young children who can be taught only through the Kindergarten or Montessori methods. Ultimately we shall have to organise a system of Nursery schools for them; but that day is far off and until it dawns, the best that we can do is to let these children play at home and learn in the wider and more congenial school of life itself.

In his admirable book on "Literacy in India", Mr. R. V. Parulekar proves that from physical, psychological, and practical points of view, the best age of admission to schools is 7+. Earlier admission leads to waste of public money and does harm to the proper growth of the child. We would strongly urge upon all Provincial Governments to give their most earnest consideration to this question. This single item of reform will eliminate a good deal of stagnation in the first year class and lead to reduction in the period necessary for attaining literacy and to consequent saving in cost.

The fourth factor is equally important. The usual tendency is to crowd the syllabus with a number of things. The stock of knowledge is rapidly increasing and life is becoming more complex. In their enthusiasm to fit the child for the many-sided adult life, our educationists have been putting into the syllabus abundance of information which, though useful for adults, can hardly interest the children. Such a crowded syllabus ceases to be child-centred. The natural aptitudes of children and their capacities to understand things are subordinated to the teacher's desire to teach them things that may be of practical use to them, when they grow up. Consequently, a large part of the available time is taken up by minor subjects and the work of teaching, reading and writing is neglected. We have to realise that a crowded syllabus leaves so little time for three R's that the period of attaining literacy is lengthened. The earlier we realise this and simplify the syllabus, the more rapid will be the spread of literacy.

Lastly, we must also discover better methods of teaching. Certain methods offer a better psychological approach to the subject and help the child to become literate in a shorter time. It should be the primary duty of the staffs of training institutions to find out new methods of teaching which will reduce the time required for attaining literacy. There is infinite scope for new ideas, variations, and experiments; and it is for our teachers and the staffs of our training institutions to be always experimenting with newer methods and adopt those which give better and quicker results. Here is a vast and attractive field for educational research. We do not lack the talent which the work requires. If only we have the will to undertake the work and the perseverance to carry it on, we shall soon discover methods which require no costly apparatus, but are easier to practise, and quicker in results. *That will greatly assist us in reducing the length of the course and liquidating illiteracy at no distant date.*
